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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBLIN 000569

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EI](#)

SUBJECT: IRELAND UNLIKELY TO RESOLVE LISBON TREATY  
REJECTION BEFORE JUNE 2009 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTION

REF: A. DUBLIN 513

[1](#)B. DUBLIN 389 & PREVIOUS

Classified By: Charge Robert J. Faucher; Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

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Summary  
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[1](#)1. (C) Ireland will tell the European Council on October 15 that it is not ready to resolve its rejection of the Lisbon Treaty. Irish political leaders believe that the European Council will give it until the December meeting to reflect further on the way forward in resolving the crisis. Minister for European Affairs Dick Roche has told us that a second Irish referendum will likely be necessary, but that the Irish don't want to revisit the Treaty until after the June 2009 local and European Parliament elections. Roche is worried that Ireland could end up in some sort of periphery status in a "two-tier" EU, if France and Germany decide to drive EU reform forward in spite of Ireland. End summary.

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Lisbon Treaty  
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[1](#)2. (C) EMBOFFs and EUR/WE Office Director Pamela Spratlen reviewed the Lisbon Treaty referendum defeat with Dick Roche (Member of Parliament and Minister for European Affairs), Senator Eugene Regan (Fine Gael), Professor Brigid Laffan (Principal, University College Dublin, College of Human Sciences), Jill Donoghue (Research Director, International Institute for European Affairs) and Rory Montgomery (Political Director, Department of Foreign Affairs) on October 7-8. Roche, who will accompany Irish Prime Minister Brian Cowen to the European Council, October 15-16, to report on Ireland's proposals for a way forward following the defeat of the Lisbon Treaty referendum on June 12, 2008 (Ref B), said that a second referendum would probably be necessary, but declared that such a referendum would not occur until the autumn of 2009 at the earliest, echoing recent analyses in the press of a number of political commentators. Reasons for the delay, in Roche's view, were a need to respect the voters' 'No' decision on June 12; a need to allow time for the government and EU to craft a coherent 'Yes' message; and wish to keep the issue of the Lisbon Treaty separate from local and European Parliament elections in June 2009.

[1](#)3. (C) Roche indicated that the Prime Minister's message at the October European Council meeting would include a read-out on the results of the government-funded research study into the reasons for the Treaty's defeat, which was completed in September (Ref A). Roche said that Cowen would inform the European Council of the formation of a new select parliamentary sub-committee of the Foreign Affairs Committee that would study the government's response to the rejection of the Treaty referendum and Ireland's future in the EU. Roche added that no decision on how to proceed would be made until the sub-committee finished its deliberations, scheduled for early December). Cowen, said Roche, would also tell the

European Council that Ireland needed further time for reflection and would remind the European Council that the views of the Irish voter must be respected. The end result, predicted Roche, would be a decision of the European Council to defer further discussion of the future of the Lisbon Treaty until its December 2008 meeting.

¶4. (C) Montgomery noted that French (and EU) President Nicolas Sarkozy had already been informed by the Prime Minister that during the October European Council meeting the Irish would make a presentation that would not contain any proposals for the way forward. He indicated that Sarkozy accepted this. However, Montgomery predicted, Sarkozy would likely push hard for Irish proposals during the December European Council meeting; the last meeting of the French Presidency. Although the Irish Attorney General is reviewing possible ways to bring parts of the Lisbon Treaty into force without a referendum, Montgomery characterized such efforts as "pie in the sky" and said that the only legal and political solution to the dilemma appeared to be a second referendum -- which would likely include "opt-outs" from aspects of the Lisbon Treaty that were problematic for Irish voters. Montgomery agreed that no referendum would be held until late in 2009.

¶5. (C) In the meantime, Irish experts are increasingly worried that a backlash may be building within the EU against Ireland as a result of its rejection of the Treaty. Donoghue, whose husband is the Irish Ambassador to Berlin, reported that anti-Irish sentiment seems to be growing in Germany. She noted that some people see the Irish as being unappreciative of the great benefit realized from membership

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in the EU over the years. (Note: When Ireland joined the EU in 1973, it was the poorest member per capita. It is now the second richest. Since 1975, Ireland is estimated to have received 85 billion euro more from the EU than it has contributed. End note.) Montgomery reported some "bitterness and resentment" against Ireland in Europe, though he went on to say that Irish have not felt marginalized within the EU as a result of the vote ) at least so far.

¶6. (C) Roche, Donoghue, and Laffan went into some detail in discussing the outcome of the research study, highlighting that 40 percent of those who voted 'No' did so because they didn't understand the Treaty and that workers, women and youth voted predominantly 'No.' Ironically, they noted, 70 percent of the Irish say they have favorable views of the EU and support Ireland's membership. Donoghue and Laffan pointed out that many voters rejected the treaty because they perceived it ) often incorrectly ) as having a negative impact on a single issue of concern, e.g., higher taxes, legalization of abortion, conscription of sons and brothers into a European army (which doesn't even exist), loss of neutrality, etc.

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Comment  
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¶7. (C) No one in Ireland has yet suggested a strategy for dealing with the rest of the EU at the European Council meeting in December. Most likely, the Irish will ask for further time for reflection. What the mood of the rest of the EU will be at that time is hard to predict (especially given the current world financial crisis), but there is clearly a divergence of purpose ) the Irish don't want to deal with the Lisbon Treaty for at least a year, or at least until after the June 2009 local and European Parliament elections. However, as Montgomery pointed out, much of the rest of the EU (and especially the French and Germans) want the Treaty finalized before the June 2009 European Parliament election so that election, and the subsequent selection of the new College of Commissioners, can be conducted on the basis of the reforms in the Lisbon Treaty rather than on the

basis of the existing Nice Treaty. However, Dick Roche admitted that it was untenable for a single small member state with less than one percent of the population of the EU to hold up European progress for long. While the Irish government would abhor a "two-tier" EU that leaves Ireland in some sort of periphery status, Roche acknowledged that this could happen.

18. (U) This message has been cleared by EUR/WE Director Pamela Spratlen.  
FAUCHER